

Pedals in Perspective, Part 2

by Bob Saydlowski, Jr



LUDWIG 205 GHOST

The *Ghost* is one of the more popular pedals in drumming. Invented by John Ramsey, the rights to the *Ghost* were recently bought by Ludwig who now manufacture it. The pedal is completely cast, except for the felt beater, and has a unique system of spring tension. A large cup on each side of the *Ghost* is loaded with a clock-type coiled flat spring. Stroke and tension are adjustable by these two spring cups. One spring throws the beater towards the head, the other spring returns it. Beater angle and pedal tension are easily adjustable from the front by inserting a pointed tool into a notch on each cup, and rotating the cup carefully to any click-stop. The *Ghost* comes factory-set for general playing. However, I found I had to play with it just a bit to get it to my own taste. Each cup has a sticker marked "P" which is to be used as a starting point for adjustment. I can foresee these labels perhaps wearing off at some point in time, and then you're lost. A better idea would be to emboss the "P" directly onto the cup where it would remain for life. The *Ghost's* linkage is a double parallel metal strap that joins the beater to the footboard. I like this concept, as it seems to offer a better sense of foot balance for

some reason. The footboard, is connected to the frame by a fat stretcher plate with two short fat pins fitting into holes at the base of the framework. A metal claw clamp connects the pedal to the drum hoop which is tightened in place by a wing nut. The clamp is adjustable in length to fit different width hoops, and once attached will hardly ever move from place.

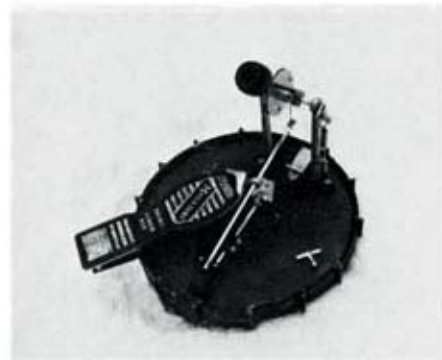
The action is very light and springy, yet feels very strong. It's most controllable playing it with the heel down. With the toe-down/heel-up, the pedal can become erratic at times. The strength and speed lie within the coiled spring cups, which the factory warns not to take apart. The springs are wound so tightly, that if taken apart, the sudden release of the springs could cause damage. The *Ghost* is a powerful pedal, ideal for certain applications, particularly the heavy rock player who needs power and strength, or the drummer who plays heel down. For those of you who remember the *Ghost* before the Ludwig takeover, the pedal has not changed much at all, except for a wing-type set screw for the beater, and a compacted felt beater ball. RETAIL PRICE: \$108.00

BRIKO MAGADINI POWER ROD

Invented by Peter Magadini, a noted clinician, performer, and author, the *Briko Power Rod* is a very unique pedal. The one piece footboard is entirely cast, as is the frame, and has an extra large toestop at the tip. The pedal is sprung by a single expansion spring adjustable at the bottom. But, Briko's claim to fame lies in their unique linkage system, and the "Power Rod" itself. The connecting link of the pedal is a nylon-coated steel cable wrapped around a large disc at the left of the beater cam axle. The cable does not connect directly to the footboard as with other drum pedals. Instead, it hooks to a 1/4" diameter rod angled 45° from the twin posts—the *Power Rod*. The end of the *Power Rod* is connected to a large cast metal shoe located to the right of the frame. At the bottom of the block is a larger rod mating the shoe to the base of the frame. Unlike the common heelplate-to-frame link, it is on this rod that the footboard connects. Extending from its heelplate is a curved bar

which clamps onto this bottom rod. The top of the footboard has a large eyebolt through which the top *Power Rod* passes. When the footboard's bar link is moved along the bottom rod, the footboard itself moves along the *Power Rod*. Leverage of the pedal is changed. The footboard may be anywhere from a little left of the beater axle's center to an extreme right position almost lining up with the right pedal post. By means of leverage, the *Power Rod* converts foot pressure into optimum power and speed. All through adjustment, the footboard retains its straight angle in ratio to the framework. Length of cable travel is adjusted by three set screws located in 2 1/4" slots in the cable disc. When these screws are loosened, the disc can be rotated, raising or lowering the angle of the *Power Rod* which adjusts footboard height. The cable is easily replaceable by separating the two halves of the disc. The disc also is adjustable horizontally to keep the cable pulling in a straight line. The beater, independent of the footboard, has its own movable housing, adjustable on the length of the axle. Beater angle may be adjusted in five positions at the spring connector piece. A common wing screw/claw plate clamps the pedal to the drum hoop. Spurs are included at the base of the frame.

The *Power Rod* is an entirely new concept in bass drum pedal action. I found that adjusting the footboard position definitely changes the action. Changes in leverage make the Briko pedal feel like many different drum pedals. But it always has a strong action. The overall feel of the pedal is mechanical; I would



have liked to see a compression spring instead. The rod connecting shoe sometimes gets in the way if you're using a close floor tom set-up. And I fail to see why anyone would locate the footboard so far back on the *Power Rod* as to "alienate" it from the frame. The Briko *Power Rod* is not a gimmick. It makes sense from a physics standpoint: leverage-control. Whether or not the pedal will gain mass acceptance remains to be seen. Getting used to the pedal's pull system takes some time. RETAIL PRICE: \$150.00